

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7660

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01756

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON PORTUGAL

REF: STATE 22603

1. AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND TOOK THE OCCASION OF A CALL JANUARY 31 ON FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER TO CONVEY US CONCERNS ABOUT PORTUGAL ON BASIS REFTEL, STRESSING OUR INTEREST IN HEARING GERMAN VIEWS ON HOW BEST TO STRENGTHEN MODERATE FORCES IN THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT.

2. GENSCHER SAID HE COMPLETELY SHARED OUR CONCERNS. HE RECALLED THAT DURING HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON LAST
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FALL IN CONNECTION WITH THE UNGA, ABOUT HALF OF HIS

CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN CONCERNED WITH THE DANGER ON THE SOUTHERN FLANK. GENSCHER NOTED THE CONTACTS PRESENTLY EXISTING BETWEEN GERMAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR PORTUGUESE COUNTERPARTS. HE RECALLED HIS FRANK TALK IN BONN TO PORTUGUESE MINISTER ALVES LATE LAST YEAR IN WHICH HE WARNED ON THE BASIS OF HIS OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE GDR ABOUT THE DANGERS OF A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER.

3. GENSCHER SAID HE HAD BEEN PLANNING TO GO TO LISBON EARLY THIS YEAR AND HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH THE PORTUGUESE FOREIGN MINISTER ON THE SUBJECT. HE WOULD CONTINUE TO REVIEW THE PLANS FOR A VISIT IN THE LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS. AS TO THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS, HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LISBON REPORTING A CONVERSATION WITH THE PORTUGUESE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO SEEMD TO BE TAKING A MORE POSITIVE VIEW OF THINGS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER EVIDENTLY THOUGHT THAT HIS PARTY'S SHARP REACTION TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAD HAD A HEALTHY EFFECT ON THE COMMUNISTS. GENSCHER ADDED THAT EVEN IF, AS SEEMED TO BE THE CASE, THE DANGER OF A LEFTIST COUP SEEMED TO HAVE FADED AT THE MOMENT, IT SEEMED TO HIM IT WAS ONLY A TEMPORARY RESPITE. THE SITUATION REMINDED HIM -- WITH THE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCE THAT THERE WERE NO SOVIET FORCES PRESENT -- OF THE SITUATION IN PRAGUE IN THE LATE 40'S AS THE COMMUNISTS INCREASINGLY MOVED INTO KEY POSITIONS AND PREPARED TO TAKE OVER POWER.

4. COMMENT: IT WAS CLEAR THAT GENSCHER WAS WORRIED ABOUT PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS, AND EQUALLY APPARENT THAT HE HAD NO CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE AS TO HOW THE PORTUGUESE MODERATES MIGHT BE AIDED. WE HAD THE IMPRESSION IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN OFFICE CONTACTS THAT THEY TOO ARE UNCLEAR AS TO WHAT SPECIFICALLY MIGHT BE DONE. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WAS CRUCIAL, BUT HERE TOO IT WAS NOT EASY TO MAKE PROGRESS. THE GERMANS WANTED TO BE HELPFUL TO THE PORTUGUESE ON THEIR REQUEST TO THE EC FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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PREFERENTIAL TARIFF TREATMENT. IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, THE PORTUGUESE PRESSED FOR INCREASED GERMAN INVESTMENT BUT, OUR CONTACTS SAID, THEY COULD ONLY POINT OUT THAT THE PRESENT POLITICAL CLIMATE IN PORTUGAL WAS HARDLY CONDUCIVE TO A HEAVY GERMAN INVESTMENT PROGRAM.
HILLENBRAND

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